

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method of mechanically removing soil from a surface intended to be cleaned, said method being performed by a surface maintenance machine and comprising:

wetting a portion of a revolving cleaning medium with a cleaning liquid;
revolving said previously wetted portion of the cleaning medium into contact with a vacuum extractor;

~~then~~ with said extractor in contact with said portion, vacuum extracting some soil and some of the cleaning liquid from ~~the~~ said previously wetted portion of the cleaning medium, said vacuum extracting occurring before said previously wetted portion revolves into contact with the surface intended to be cleaned;

revolving said previously wetted portion of the cleaning medium away from contact with the vacuum extractor toward contact with the surface intended to be cleaned;

~~then~~-wiping the surface intended to be cleaned with said portion of the revolving cleaning medium so as to transfer soil from the surface intended to be cleaned to the cleaning medium; and

repeating said wetting, extracting and wiping during a cleaning procedure.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising ~~the step of~~ extracting soil and cleaning liquid on the portion of the cleaning medium previously wiped against the surface intended to be cleaned and prior to again wetting the same portion.

3. (Currently amended) An automated method of removing soil from a surface intended to be cleaned by a movable machine having a revolving cleaning medium comprising:

wetting a portion of the revolving cleaning medium with a cleaning liquid;
revolving said previously wetted portion of the cleaning medium toward a vacuum
extractor, said extractor having an elongated slot opening in contact with the
cleaning medium, said slot opening extending substantially across said
previously wetted portion of the cleaning medium;
then vacuum extracting some soil and some of the cleaning solution from said
previously wetted portion of the revolving cleaning medium prior to said
portion revolving into contact with the surface intended to be cleaned;
revolving said previously wetted portion of the cleaning medium away from
contact with the slot opening and toward contact with the surface intended
to be cleaned;
then wiping the surface with said portion of the revolving cleaning medium
previously vacuum extracted so as to transfer soil from the surface intended
to be cleaned to the revolving cleaning medium; and
repeating said wetting, extracting and wiping during a cleaning procedure.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3 further comprising ~~the step of~~
extracting soil and cleaning solution from the portion of the cleaning medium previously
wiped against the surface intended to be clean prior to again wetting the same portion.

5. (Currently amended) A method of removing soil from a surface intended to be
cleaned using a movable machine, said method comprising:

moving the movable machine across the surface while repeatedly:
wetting a portion of a revolving cleaning medium with a cleaning liquid;
revolving said wetted portion of the cleaning medium into contact with a slot
opening of a vacuum extractor;

with said vacuum extractor, vacuum extracting soil and cleaning liquid from said portion of the revolving cleaning medium through said slot opening prior to said portion revolving into contact with the surface to be cleaned; and then revolving said wetted portion of the cleaning medium out of contact with said slot opening and toward contact with said surface to be cleaned; and
wiping the surface with said portion of the revolving cleaning medium so as to transfer soil from the surface intended to be cleaned to the cleaning medium.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5 wherein ~~the step of said~~ wetting the portion of the revolving cleaning medium includes spraying cleaning liquid onto the cleaning medium from a nozzle, said cleaning medium capturing substantially all of a spray output of the nozzle.
7. (Canceled) The method of claim 5 wherein the step of extracting soil and cleaning liquid from the portion of the cleaning medium is achieved through a vacuum extractor.
8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5 wherein the cleaning medium includes at least one elongated generally cylindrical shaped element rotating generally about an axis of rotation, with said slot opening being generally parallel to said axis of rotation.
9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the cleaning medium includes a pair of elongated generally cylindrical shaped elements which are counter-rotated relative to each other, and wherein said axis of rotation is generally parallel with the surface intended to be cleaned.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 9 wherein ~~the step of~~ said extracting is achieved through a pair of vacuum apertures, each of said pair of vacuum apertures being associated with a different one of the counter-rotated elongated generally cylindrical shaped elements.
11. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the axis of rotation is aligned in a direction generally transverse to an operational direction of device movement across the surface.
12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5 wherein the surface is a carpet surface, and wherein ~~the step of~~ wiping the surface transfers soil from fibers of the carpet surface to the cleaning medium.
13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5 wherein the surface is a fabric surface, and wherein ~~the step of~~ wiping the surface transfers soil from fibers of the fabric surface to the cleaning medium.
14. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the movable machine includes at least one drip guard in contact with at least a portion of the cleaning medium for redirecting cleaning solution within a cleaning head toward the cleaning medium.
15. (Currently amended) A method of cleaning a carpeted surface, said method being performed by a surface maintenance machine and comprising:
 - spraying a portion of a revolving cleaning medium with a cleaning liquid;
 - ~~then~~ removing some soil and some of the cleaning liquid from the previously wetted portion of the cleaning medium using a vacuum device having a slot opening in contact with said cleaning medium, said removing drawing soil

and cleaning liquid through said slot opening and occurring prior to said
portion revolving into contact with the carpet surface;
~~then~~-wiping the carpeted surface with the portion of the revolving cleaning medium
so as to transfer soil from the carpeted surface to the cleaning medium; and
~~then~~-repeating said spraying, removing, and wiping the carpeted surface during a
carpet cleaning procedure.

16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15 wherein ~~the step of~~
spraying involves pumping a cleaning liquid from a reservoir carried by the
surface maintenance machine through a nozzle, said nozzle spraying
substantially all of its spray output directly onto the cleaning medium, with
said cleaning medium being positioned between the nozzle and the surface
intended to be cleaned.

17. (Canceled) The method of claim 15 wherein the step of removing involves applying a
vacuum to the previously wetted portion of the cleaning medium so as to convey soil and
cleaning liquid to a receptacle of soiled solution carried by the surface maintenance
machine.

18. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~15~~ 16 wherein ~~the step of~~ said wiping
involves rotating a cylindrical cleaning medium in contact with the carpeted surface, and
said vacuum extractor slot extending substantially along across the cylindrical cleaning
medium, with said vacuum extractor slot being positioned between said nozzle and said
surface intended to be cleaned.

19. (Currently amended) The method of claim 18 wherein the cylindrical cleaning medium
is rotated about an axis which is generally perpendicular to a direction of machine use, and

said vacuum extractor slot includes a pair of generally parallel walls, with ends of said pair of walls being in contact with the cylindrical cleaning medium.

20. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the surface maintenance machine either a self-propelled machine or a non-propelled machine.

21. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the movable machine includes at least one drip guard in contact with at least a portion of the cleaning medium for redirecting cleaning solution within a cleaning head toward the cleaning medium.

22. (Currently amended) A method of cleaning a carpeted surface, said method being performed by a surface maintenance machine and comprising:

spraying a portion of a revolving cleaning medium with a cleaning liquid;

revolving said portion of the cleaning medium toward contact with a vacuum extractor;

~~then~~-removing some soil and some of the cleaning liquid from the previously wetted portion of the cleaning medium using a said vacuum device extractor, said vacuum extractor having a slot opening in contact with the previously wetted portion of the cleaning medium, and said slot opening having a slot width which is substantially smaller than a diameter of a vacuum conduit coupled to said extractor, said removing occurring ~~occurring~~ prior to said portion revolving into contact with the carpeted surface;

revolving said portion of the cleaning medium away from contact with the vacuum extractor and toward contact with the carpeted surface;

~~then~~-wiping the carpeted surface with the portion of the revolving cleaning medium so as to transfer soil from the carpeted surface to the cleaning medium, said

~~step of~~ wiping causing an amount of cleaning liquid to be thrown from the cleaning medium into contact with interior surfaces of a cleaning head; and ~~then~~-redirecting the amount of cleaning liquid thrown from the cleaning medium back toward the cleaning medium so as to minimize the dropping of large droplets of cleaning solution onto the carpeted surface.